



**Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Collaborative General
Membership Meeting Summary
November 20, 2015
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

1. Draft press release when funds are awarded.
2. Update objectives.
3. Schedule discussion about biomass industry in CA and why Ultrapower might close next year.
4. Reforestation Committee to meet in December. Committee comments to be submitted to USFS on DEIS will be sent to YSS members for feedback prior to submission.

MEETING GOALS:

- Improve understanding of drought and bark beetle impact on forest
- Discuss future activities of YSS
- Leadership transition

SUMMARY:

Welcome and Introductions:

Co-Chair Albrecht welcomed the group and self-introductions were made. New member, Dwight Follien, representing Groveland Trail Heads was welcomed.

Tree Mortality Presentation and Report on Tree Mortality Meeting with Governor's Staff

Co-Chair John Buckley showed slides depicting the huge die off on the SNF. While it is worse than on the STF, the mortality on the STF is substantial and growing. The concentration of mortality on both forests is most visible in the pines. In the SNF, 1/3 of the trees in the pine forests or forests with a mix of pine and white fir are dead. Of highest concern, more than 50% of pines 35" or larger in diameter are dead and dying, diminishing large old growth trees for wildlife and recreation values.

Co-Chair Mike Albrecht reported that on October 30th, he and a number of representatives of Tuolumne County and other counties met with the Governor's staff. As a result of this meeting and other communications, the Governor declared a State of Emergency as the die-off is unprecedented. This made funds available to certain state agencies to assist with tree removal. However, the funds must be used on public lands or to address trees that threaten public infrastructure.

Acceptance of August General Membership Meeting Summary:

Agreement: The membership approved the meeting summary for August as distributed.

Report on Tree Mortality & Rim Fire Recovery YNP

Mr. Joe Meyer reported within YNP there is an area of study called the Yosemite Forest Dynamic Plot. In this area, trees that include very large old growth have been inventoried and will continue to be tracked for decades. Any time a tree dies, it is documented and the cause of death is recorded, if it can be determined. The Rim Fire burned through this area at low intensity. Before the Rim Fire, the background mortality was 1%. After the Rim, there was 3% mortality rate. They are seeing current increases in mortality but have not determined yet how to tease out latent Rim mortality from drought mortality. Over the last 3 months, the die off has

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

been pretty dramatic and they are now seeing it in the Yosemite Valley and at higher elevations. Pines are taking the brunt of the mortality. The biggest decline is in large growth. From the onset of stress it can take 2-5 years or more for the tree to die.

Several resources were cited by members to include the Beverly Bulaon presentations:

YouTube presentation for Mariposa Workshop on Insect Infestation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ale3LoHleVA>, and the Beverly Bulaon written presentation on South Sierra Insect Infestation:

http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3846647.pdf

Mill Capacity Report

Mr. Brian Wayland, timber purchaser for Sierra Pacific Industries, said SPI is running mills 24/7 to try to make room for the pine that is still out there. He said there is 325 million board feet worth of dead trees from bark beetle mortality just in the Sierra N.F. which is more than mills can possibly handle. He noted when a small diameter tree is impacted by stress, SPI cannot use it at Chinese Camp as it cannot be used for fencing, but rather just for pallets which is not cost-effective. SPI has the capacity to take green small diameter trees in Chinese Camp, but they are still limited at the Sonora mill to larger diameter and they can only produce about 80M board feet a year. There are 50M board feet in Butte Fire. For mill capacity to exist there has to be a reliable source of timber going forward.

Pacific Ultrapower could very likely be closed this time next year if there is no contract with PG&E (can process 220,000 tons per year). There is a glut of renewable energy on the market and biomass costs much more than natural gas and solar to produce.

Update on SNC, CFWC, HUD & Other R.F. Recovery Funding Opportunities

Mr. Patrick Koepele said YSS has received (through TRT) a planning grant from SNC for four meadows, ten springs and two undersized culverts. Some initial steps have taken longer than desired, so fieldwork didn't get done as early as desired. Design work has not been done as a consequence. Chris Dallas said Secretary Laird the Governor authorized CEQA exemption for Rim Fire recovery activities. So, permits can now move ahead.

In regards to the Wildlife Conservation Board, the application is queued up but they have been waiting for CEQA compliance. This grant would install water troughs, owl boxes, deer migration route treatments, etc. Nathan Graveline said they would like to get the application to the WCB at their March board meeting for approval. The rough estimate for implementation includes those items listed above and 200 acres of forest thinning).

Forest Service representative Clare Long said the HUD Grant is in after about 9 months of preparation. The application includes three pillars: forest and watershed health, a biomass and wood products campus, and community resiliency centers in Groveland and Tuolumne City. The state should hear in January if HUD and the Rockefeller Foundation decide on anything they want to fund within the application. The total ask was \$117 million.

Mr. Koepele said the Cal FIRE grant for biomass removal was denied. TRT has wrapped up one NFF grant. Mr. Seth Connolly said there is another grant in process with Global Relief for a volunteer and outreach component for tree planting.

Update on Prop One Funding

Mr. Koepele said TRT, on behalf of YSS, submitted a \$3.4M Prop One Dept. of Fish and Wildlife application for a large scale forest planning effort on the green forest north of the Rim Fire. The grant would allow purchase of LIDAR data for rapid assessment and then development of

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

NEPA/ CEQA plans. The department technical review is about wrapped up and they are looking at a decision in December or January.

Report from Sean Crook (added to agenda):

Mr. Shaun Crook was part of a meeting with Secretary Vilsack along with legislators and USDA folks from Sacramento. He said he emphasized NEPA exemption for wildfire recovery and restoration. He also discussed having wildfires funded from a separate category than base USFS funds so as to prevent stripping basic forest programs when wildfire costs are so high.

Large Landscape Restoration Proposal

CC Albrecht described the Leadership Team (LT) as being made up of past chairs, the current chair and vice-chair, the financial officer and the TRT ED. He said there is a need to get more accomplished on the ground while addressing social, economic and resource objectives.

CC Buckley said the two of them have done what they can to raise the pace and scale of green activity at the same time the USFS is overwhelmed with salvage and Rim recovery planning. They want to see significant pace on green areas. The question is can YSS strategically come forward with a landscape and funding plan? In developing the HUD grant, YSS put forward a proposal to do a large scale plan. However, this type of effort was determined to be outside the parameter of what was eligible in that grant process.

CC Buckley said they stepped back and met with reps of the USFS and asked how YSS could partner with the STF to package a large scale planning effort through a Prop One grant. If the submitted proposal is funded, it could start the ball rolling. The LT met to begin laying out a large scale planning process for a 10-year period to do beyond what is already planned on the green forest. The challenge is for YSS to move beyond the current USFS limits. The LT is working on an initial draft of the plan and will bring it to the general membership as it develops. It will contain significantly increased science-based thinning like YSS saw at the experimental forest and also prescribed burning. There are scientists helping behind the scene. There is also a ecological enhancement component that will be built in.

FO John Amodio said some of the impediments include the air quality impacts of prescribed burning. However, the EPA is reopening their rule on prescribed fire and wildfires so there may be an ability to reduce conflicts with Air District constraints: <https://www.rcrcnet.org/new-epa-proposal-offers-guidance-prescribed-burning>. In terms of funding, AB32 funds are about \$2.5B per year. An emerging issue is CARB did not factor in reducing wildfire emissions in reaching greenhouse gas reductions. Emissions from the Rim Fire were more than all the savings that year.

Mr. Meyer added that part of his responsibilities in YNP is air quality. He believes that progress is being made by local Air District representatives who understand the connection between wildfire and air quality impacts.

Mr. Hanvelt noted the Governor's proclamation requires CARB and Caltrans to participate in addressing the tree mortality issues.

CC Albrecht said the role of YSS to try to help garner resources to be the enabler or partner of the Forest Service. The SNC has developed the Watershed Improvement Process (WIP) and YSS wants to work closely with SNC through this.

Update on Recent Activities & Meetings

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

FO Amodio reported on a meeting he had with Mr. Russ Henley, Assistant Secretary for CA Resource Agency for Forests. He said the department is reviewing the reports concerning thinning effects on greenhouse gas emissions. A report CARB relied upon had flaws as it did not address the long-term benefits from thinning in relationship to preventing mega-fires. He said they will be setting aside some funds for a thinning pilot project.

FO Amodio also spoke with Mr. Jim Brennan regarding WIP. He said the USFS has committed to jointly applying the WIP. The Stanislaus will likely be the next forest on which they pursue this initiative.

Confirm Use of NFF Funds:

CC Albrecht said the current NFF grant has funds earmarked for promoting YSS. Some funds were used for the two field trips to the experimental forest. The LT is requesting that \$8,500 be expended over the next 4-6 months to support 120 of work by FO Amodio in Sacramento and other places on behalf of YSS.

Agreement: The membership agreed to this use of funds.

Incoming Chair Trott-Future YSS Goals and Organization:

Incoming Chair Chris Trott provided some information about his background and also his passion for developing and sustaining multiple local forest markets and improving the way the StNF is managed. He said he would like to see YSS focus on two things besides enhancing the collaborative. The first one is treating the green forest through a large landscape effort that creatively addresses barriers and is tied to an aggressive outreach. The second is restoration of the Rim Fire area to include providing comments on the Reforestation DEIS with a request to extend the comment period past January 11th.

Incoming Vice-Chair Graveline added he and Chair Trott are aligned on what they would like to see happen. His goal is to help hold YSS together as a group by staying focused on making a difference on the forest.

Other:

Mr. Marty Gmelin announced the release of the Reforestation DEIS stating it contains five alternatives based on public input. There will be an Open House on December 3rd from 3-6PM in the conference rooms of the supervisor's office.

CC Buckley said there is a Reforestation Committee that represents a broad diversity of perspectives. The committee will meet on Dec. 18th from 1-4PM. The Reforestation Committee will attempt to come forward with suggestions for a response to the DEIS. He asked YSS for authority to pass on comments to the USFS by the deadline if it is before the next YSS meeting. The committee will send out a draft of the comments to YSS membership, minus the USFS.

Agreement: The membership agreed to give the committee the above authority.

Mr. Scott Gelfand announced the scoping period is open for the rebuild of the Berkeley Tuolumne Camp.

Mr. Jerry Fouts spoke to the group about the importance of the forest and said it should be considered infrastructure and its health funded.

CC Buckley said YSS has been an extremely positive group to work with and it has been a true pleasure working with a variety of interests. He praised the efforts of TRT for their fiscal assistance and also praised the YSS "lobbyist" in Sacramento, FO Amodio, for his efforts. He

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

thanked Ms. Lott, CC Albrecht and Ms. Vicki Albrecht for their contributions. CC Buckley put out a challenge for YSS to help produce measurable differences on the ground.

CC Albrecht said he went back at looked at prior agendas, which reminded him of how he went from being pessimistic about the potential of success to when it turned to optimism with the reorganization as an independent group. He reminisced about 2014 stating that was the year YSS wrote the letter to Mr. Randy Moore that ended with “united we stand” against the litigation. He said that helped change YSS. He reviewed some of the changes highlighted in the article, “Local Consensus to Thin Overgrown Forests” that reported on how diverse groups were standing together. He said that would never had happened before YSS. His challenge to YSS is to stand together even when there is not crisis.

YSS thanked the co-chairs for their leadership and presented them with gifts of appreciation.

Next YSS General Meeting:

Friday, February 19th, 1-4PM

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Members

Name	Organization	Attendance
Jerry Jensen	American Forest Resource Council	Present
Jerry Fouts	American Motorcyclist Association, District 36	Present
Dave Pickett	AMA36/Alternate	
Todd Miller	Blue Mountain Minerals	
Jeff Redoutey	BMM/Alternate	
John Romena	Buena Vista Biomass Power	
Steve Brink	CA Forestry Association	Present
Walt Kruse	Central Sierra Audubon Society	Present
Linda Millsbaugh	CSAS/Alternate	
John Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	Present
Lindsey Meyers	CSERC/Alternate	
	Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians	
Chris Trott	CT Bioenergy Consulting	Present
Jody Trott	CTBC/Alternate	
Scott Gelfand	Friends of Berkeley Tuolumne Camp	Present
Phil Coffin	FBTC/Alternate	
Jim Dambacher	Dambacher Construction/Landowner	Present
Karl Dambacher	DC/Alternate	
Dwight Follien	Groveland Trail Heads	Present
Dusgty Vaughn	GTH/Alternate	
Michael Damaso	Merced Dirt Riders/ Stanislaus Trail Bike Association	
Paul Maben	Pacific Gas & Electric	
Kamran Rasheed	PG&E Alternate	
Stuart Crook	Permitee/Landowner	
Bob Brennan	PL/Alternate	
Mike Horvath	SFPUC/Natural Resources	

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

Michael Vroman	San Francisco PUC-Hetch Hetchy	
Peter Dean	PUC/HH Alternate	
Jon Sturtevant	Sierra Club – Tuolumne Group	Present
Rick Delvin	SCTG/Alternate	
Brian Wayland	Sierra Pacific Industries	Present
	SPI Alternate	
Allen Johnson	SouthWest InterFace Team	Present
Kelly Bearden	SWIFT Alternate	
	Tuolumne Band Me-Wuk Tribal Council	
Willie Dutra	TBM-WTC/Alternate	
Sherri Brennan	Tuolumne County	
John Gray	TC/Alternate	
Mike Albrecht	Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources & Environment	Present
Vicki Albrecht	TuCARE/Alternate	
Shaun Crook	Tuolumne County Farm Bureau	Present
Sasha Farkas	TCFB/Alternate	
Lindsay Mattos	Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District	
Stephanie Suess	TCRCD/Alternate	
Jim Maddox	Tuolumne County Sportsmen/Yosemite Deer Herd Advisory Council	
John Amodio	Tuolumne River Trust	Present
Patrick Koepele	TRT/Alternate	Present
Seth Connolly	TRT/Alternate	Present
Jim Phelan	Tuolumne-Mariposa Resources Advisory Council	

COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Bill Haigh	Bureau of Land Management	Present
Carolyn Loft	Carlson Consulting	Present
Nathan Graveline	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Present
Joe Meyer	NPS, Yosemite National Park	Present
Linda Mazzu	NPSYNP/Alternate	
Scott Tangenberg	USFS Stanislaus NF	
Ann Denton	USFS/Alternate	Present
Marty Gmelin	USFS/Alternate	Present

OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Name	Organization
Randy Hanvelt	Tuolumne County
Clare Long	USFS
Jim Junette	USFS
Chris Dallas	SNC